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**The China Mail.**

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It is, announced in the *Government Gazette*, that the 'Dogs Ordinances' shall come into operation on and from the 31st of the present month. As a rule, new Ordinances come into operation on the first, not on the last, day of the month. That, however, is a matter of small importance. What is more worthy of note is the fact that the coming into operation of the Ordinances

at the end of this month means that owners of dogs will have to pay for a licence which covers a period of only five months the same amount as should entitle them to a licence available for a whole year. The section of the 'Ordinance dealing with licences runs: "No person shall keep a dog in this colony without a licence from the Captain Superintendent of Police. The fee payable for each dog included in such licence shall be one dollar and a half. All licences shall expire on the 31st day of December of the year in which they are respectively taken out." Therefore, according to the last-quoted clause, all licences taken out on the 31st day of the present month expire on the 31st of December next.

Of course it will happen every year that a certain number of dog-owners will have to take the trouble to check with the council for the full period of twelve months. The licence has to be taken out when the dog 'comes of age'—that is to say, when it is three months old—and that may be only a month or a week before the 31st of December, on which date the licence expires. The coming of age of a puppy—when it attains the dignity of being a dog in the eyes of the law—is an event over which nobody can be said to exercise any control. The owner of an animal which reaches the legal age of doghood in the beginning of January may regard himself as a more fortunate individual than the man who acquires a pup a month old

in September. As the year expires on the 31st of December of the year, which they are respectively taken out, the necessity for taking out a licence twice within a few weeks for the same dog is inevitable. But what is the reason for compelling all who are possessed at present of what is legally regarded as a dog on the 31st of July to pay a dollar and a half for a licence which ought to be valid for twelve months but which will only be good for five months? The Governor is empowered to fix the date on which the Ordinance shall come into operation, but if it was intended to put it in force so soon after its passing, why should the 31st of December be fixed as the date for the commencement of the new year? The Ordinance is not intended to be retrospective. The 31st of July

It would be quite as suitable a date, and it would allow the first licences that are taken out to run for a whole year. The fact is that the manner in which this Ordinance—an excellent Ordinance in its intention—has been dealt with only affords one more instance of the loose and ill-considered style in which the legislation of the colony generally is carried on. The Attorney General evidently wished to copy as closely as he could the English Act under which dog licences are issued. These licences all expire on the 31st of December of each year. I do not see the cause into which this date has crept, and, as I am sure, it is not a very satisfactory one. As, for example, it did, there was a very good reason for fixing the 31st of December as the date at which the licences should expire. But there is

absolutely no reason why that date should be fixed in this case, where the Ordinance comes into force on the 31st of July. A dollar and a half is not a large sum, but in these hard times one would pay it once a year rather than twice a year. Small as the fee is, no doubt many Chinese who would be willing to pay it once a year for the sake of keeping a dog will feel it a hardship to have to pay it twice within six months. No harm would have been done if the enforcement of the Ordinance had been deferred until the 1st of January next. In fact we think that would have been a better course than putting it into operation so quickly after its passing, for in the interval, no doubt, a large proportion

the superfluous cars of the colony would be weeded out, and the police would be able in the meantime to obtain a list of nearly complete as possible, of the Chinese dog-owners in the colony. As it is, the police will find it a rather difficult thing to prove ownership, in Chinese cases. We expect to hear of huge slaughter of repudiated dogs next month, and we hope the most merciful means available will be adopted for disposing of the unfortunate animals. It is events that they will not be made use of by the police as targets for revolver practice.

This closing of the silver mines in Colorado and the shutting down of silver mining in Montana is a blow to the silver

with the expected closing of the mines in Chili, must tend to better the silver market materially. This action on the part of the Silver Kings is a sufficient answer to the fiction that the white metal can be produced at a profit when the price is 9d. the ounce. Whether the slight recovery in the exchange to-day and on Saturday is owing to the news from the silver mines, or to the natural reaction from the panic rates which scored the commercial world last week,—or to both causes combined—matters little. Bottom seems to have been found at last, and perhaps the rise in silver values will now continue. What is meant in Rauter's remarks

by the statement that "Mexico taking measures to prevent 'silver coinage' is not easy to explain. In these days the gradual replacement here of the Mexican dollar by another coin of equal quality and weight would not be so difficult."







